Priory School

Admissions Policy

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Signed: _____ Date:

Caroline Masih - Chair of Governors

Contents

Statement of Intent		3
1	Legal framework	4
2	Roles and responsibilities	4
3	Determining the published admission number	4
4	Nursery	5
5	Reception admissions	5
6	Oversubscription criteria	5
7	Equality, diversity and inclusion	6
8	Consultation, determination and publication	6
9	Applications, offers and starting school	6
10	In-year admissions and waiting lists	7
11	Admissions appeals	7
12	Monitoring and review	8

Statement of Intent

Priory School is a foundation primary school for children aged 4 to 11. We are an inclusive school and welcome applications from all families. We are committed to fair, transparent and accessible admissions arrangements that enable parents and carers to understand how places are allocated, without feeling discouraged from applying.

Our approach reflects our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We value the different backgrounds, experiences and needs of our school community, and do not select pupils by academic ability or aptitude. We seek to remove barriers to participation, make reasonable adjustments where required and support children and families through admission and transition.

In line with Priory's commitment to sustainability, we aim to minimise unnecessary paper use through secure electronic communication and administration wherever practical, while continuing to provide printed information and accessible alternatives for families who need them.

The governing board is the admission authority. This policy describes how Priory administers admission and applies the determined arrangements. The specific arrangements for Reception entry in September 2027 and in-year applications in 2027–28 must be formally determined and published. Nursery admissions are managed separately.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admissions Appeals Code and applicable admissions regulations and statutory guidance.

It should be read alongside the school's SEND Policy, SEN Information Report, equality policies and data protection arrangements. Where legislation or the formally determined admission arrangements take precedence, those requirements apply.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board, as admission authority, determines the admissions arrangements and published admission number (PAN), oversees their fair and lawful implementation, ensures publication and consultation where required, and arranges an independent appeals panel and clerk.

The Headteacher oversees admissions administration under the governing board's delegation, reviews complex capacity or eligibility decisions and ensures appropriate arrangements for pupils joining the school.

The admissions office receives, acknowledges and records applications, verifies relevant evidence, communicates decisions, maintains waiting lists and notifies the local authority. Decisions must be authorised under the school's agreed delegation.

The home local authority coordinates the normal Reception admissions round and communicates offers. The independent appeals panel, supported by an independent clerk, determines appeals; Priory governors do not sit on the school's own appeal panel.

3. Determining the published admission number

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception is currently 90. The governing board determines and publishes the PAN annually as part of the school's formal admission arrangements. The PAN applicable to each admission year is confirmed in the published Admissions Arrangements for that year.

The Reception PAN is not an automatic ceiling for admissions to other year groups. In-year applications must be considered against actual available capacity and any lawful, evidenced prejudice to efficient education or the efficient use of resources. Infant class size legislation and permitted exceptions are considered where applicable.

4. Nursery

Nursery admissions are managed directly by Priory and are separate from statutory Reception admission arrangements. Children may enter Nursery in the term after their third birthday, subject to the school's published criteria, available sessions and applicable funding arrangements.

Families can obtain the current application form, session availability, funded entitlement information and any charges for additional provision from the school office. Where applications exceed places, the published Nursery allocation criteria will be used. Nursery offers or refusals will be communicated to families. There is no statutory school admission appeal for a Nursery place.

A Nursery place does not guarantee a Reception place. Parents must apply separately through their home local authority. Any specialist early years pathway, including Acorns, follows the relevant local authority or panel process.

5. Reception admissions

Children normally enter Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. For September 2027 entry, parents must apply through the local authority where the child lives, even if Priory is outside that authority. Slough residents apply through Slough Borough Council.

The national closing date for on-time applications is 15 January 2027. The home local authority issues the formal offer on or after 16 April 2027, under the coordinated admissions scheme. Priory ranks applications under its determined arrangements and does not issue separate offers during the normal coordinated round.

Where applications exceed available places, the oversubscription criteria apply. Children whose Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) names Priory are admitted through the statutory EHCP process and count towards the PAN where applicable. Late applications are dealt with under the home local authority's scheme.

Parents offered a Reception place may request part-time attendance until compulsory school age or defer entry within the statutory limits. Requests for admission outside the normal age group, including summer-born children, are considered individually in the child's best interests, taking account of parental views, relevant evidence and the Headteacher's views. Where a request for delayed admission to Reception is agreed, parents must submit an application during the normal admissions round for the following academic year. Agreement to admission outside the normal age group does not guarantee a place at Priory School.

6. Oversubscription criteria

Priory School does not have a designated catchment area. Where applications exceed the number of places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in the school's formally determined admission arrangements for the relevant academic year. The school's current oversubscription criteria, listed in order of priority, are as follows:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children, including children who appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of adoption.
2. Children with a brother or sister attending Priory at the time of admission and living at the same address. Siblings include full, half, step, adopted and foster siblings living in the same family unit.
3. Children of staff employed at Priory for at least two years at the time of application, or recruited to a post with a demonstrable skill shortage.
4. Distance from home to school, with priority to those living nearest.

Within each criterion, distance is used to rank applicants. Where identical distances affect the last available place, supervised random allocation is used and recorded. The relevant infant class size exception will be considered for twins or other multiple-birth children where applicable.

The school may request proportionate evidence to verify address or priority claims. Any withdrawal of an offer is limited to circumstances permitted by the School Admissions Code.

7. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Priory is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relationships. Admissions criteria and processes will be applied consistently and will not unlawfully disadvantage children or families because of protected characteristics or economic disadvantage.

Applications will not be refused because a child has SEND, a disability, low attainment, a previous behaviour or attendance history, a different curriculum or missing records from a previous school. The school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and parents and provide accessible information where needed.

Children with an EHCP naming Priory are admitted through the statutory EHCP process. Children with SEND who do not have an EHCP are considered through the ordinary admissions arrangements on the same basis as other applicants.

8. Consultation, determination and publication

The governing board will consult on proposed changes where required by the School Admissions Code, and at least once every seven years even if no changes are proposed. Consultation will run for at least six weeks between 1 October and 31 January of the relevant determination year.

Admission arrangements are determined annually by 28 February and published, with the required information supplied to the local authority by 15 March. Changes after determination will follow the statutory correction or variation procedure.

The school will publish its in-year admission arrangements and application information on its website and make paper copies available on request.

9. Applications, offers and starting school

Applications are considered only against the published arrangements for the relevant admission year. The school will request only evidence needed to verify an application or a claimed priority. All decisions and supporting reasons will be recorded securely.

Once an offer has been accepted, the school will arrange admission without unnecessary delay, obtain essential registration and emergency information, and plan safeguarding, SEND, medical and transition support as appropriate. Completion of routine administrative forms will not be used to impose an additional admissions condition.

An offer may be withdrawn only in circumstances permitted by the School Admissions Code, following consideration of the evidence and appropriate notification. Families of UK service personnel and Crown servants will be considered under the specific provisions of the Code.

10. In-year admissions and waiting lists

Priory manages its own in-year applications for Reception to Year 6. Parents may apply at any time using the current school application form, available from the office or school website, and may submit it to admissions@prioryschool.com. Applications forwarded by the local authority will also be accepted.

The school will acknowledge applications and provide a written decision as soon as reasonably practicable, aiming within 10 school days and no later than 15 school days after receipt. Slough Borough Council will be notified of applications and outcomes promptly.

Where a place is available, it will normally be offered unless a lawful exception applies. Where applications exceed available places, the determined oversubscription criteria apply. A refusal must explain the actual, evidenced reason, rather than simply stating that the PAN has been reached, and must give information about the right to appeal.

A waiting list will be maintained for the normal Reception round until at least 31 December 2027 and for oversubscribed year groups in accordance with published arrangements. Waiting lists are ranked by the oversubscription criteria, not the date of application, and are reranked when circumstances change. Admission under the Fair Access Protocol may take priority as permitted by the Code. Joining a waiting list does not affect appeal rights.

11. Admission appeals

Parents refused a place in Reception to Year 6 have a right to appeal to an independent school admission appeal panel. Priory is responsible for arranging an independent panel and clerk, including where the service is commissioned externally. The governing board does not hear appeals against its own admission decisions.

A written refusal will explain the reason for refusal, the appeal right, the deadline and how to submit written grounds. Parents will have at least 20 school days from notification of refusal to lodge an appeal. The normal-round appeals timetable will be published on the school website by 28 February each year.

Appellants will ordinarily receive at least 10 school days' notice of a hearing. On-time normal-round appeals will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline; in-year appeals within 30 school days of being lodged. Reasoned decisions will normally be sent within five school days of the hearing where possible.

The independent panel will hear both parties fairly and apply the appropriate statutory test, including the distinct infant class size rules where relevant. There is no statutory admission appeal against refusal of a Nursery place. Disputes concerning the school named in an EHCP follow the SEND Tribunal route.

12. Monitoring and review

The governing board will review this policy and the admissions arrangements annually. Changes will be communicated to relevant staff and interested parties and published as required.

Next scheduled review: November 2027